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ABSTRACT

The aim of the New York City Board of Education's Bilingual Materials Development Project was to design and implement a process to produce culturally and linguistically relevant curricula and screening instruments for use with Chinese, Haitian, and Korean students of limited English proficiency (LEP) enrolled in Kindergarten through Grade 2. The project was centrally administered under the jurisdiction of the Office of Bilingual Education. Title VII funds supported a full-time project coordinator, resource specialist, secretary, and hourly consultants and teachers. In 1983-84, the project was able to: (1) conduct an extensive needs assessment to determine the need for, and availability and appropriateness of, curriculum materials at the Kindergarten level, for use with the targeted language groups; (2) develop a resource Kindergarten curriculum handbook in each target language; (3) develop a screening instrument for new entrants into Kindergarten through Grade 2 in Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, and Haitian Creole; and (4) begin identifying sites and classroom teachers to pilot test the developed materials. In one year, the project was successful in meeting its objectives even though some objectives were based on a projected time schedule of three years. (KH)

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BILINGUAL MATERIALS

DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

1983-1984

OEA Evaluation Report

O.E.A. Evaluation Report

Robert Tobias, Administrator of Evaluation
Judith S. Torres, Senior Manager

Grant Number: G00-830-3804

BILINGUAL MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

1983-1984

Project Coordinator:
Ms. Aurea Rodriguez

Prepared by:
O.E.A. Bilingual Education Evaluation Unit

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Office of Educational Assessment
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A Summary of the Report

The aim of the Bilingual Materials Development Project was to design and implement a process to produce culturally and linguistically relevant curricula and screening instruments for use with Chinese, Haitian, and Korean students of limited English proficiency (LEP) enrolled in New York City public schools in kindergarten through grade two.

The project was centrally administered under the jurisdiction of the Office of Bilingual Education of the New York City Board of Education. Title VII funds supported a full-time project coordinator, resource specialist, and secretary, and hourly consultants and teachers.

The project was able to:

--conduct an extensive needs assessment to determine the need for, availability of, and appropriateness of curriculum materials at the kindergarten level, for use with the targeted language groups;

--develop a resource kindergarten curriculum handbook in each target language;

--develop a screening instrument for new entrants into kindergarten through grade two in Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, and Haitian Creole;

--begin identifying sites and classroom teachers to pilot test the developed materials.

In one year, the project was successful in meeting its objectives even though some objectives were based on a projected time schedule of three years.

The following recommendations are aimed at continuing the overall effectiveness of the program:

--Procedures to pilot-test and validate the assessment instruments should be continued.

--Staff development activities should be developed to train teachers in the proper use of the assessment instruments.

--Project activities should be coordinated with New York City Board of Education units responsible for curriculum and materials development, test development, and teacher training.

--Materials developed should be disseminated through agencies such as the New York State Education Department and the Title VII national network of centers.

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BILINGUAL MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Location:	New York City Public Schools Office of Bilingual Education 131 Livingston Street New York, New York 11201
Year of Operation:	1983-1984
Project Coordinator:	Ms. Aurea Rodriguez
Target Languages:	Chinese, Haitian Creole, and Korean

I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Bilingual Materials Development Project (B.M.D.P.) proposed two long-range goals: developing, validating, and pilot-testing (on a citywide basis) instruments for the initial screening of new entrants into grades K-2 in New York City public schools whose native language is Chinese, Haitian Creole, or Korean; and developing and pilot testing curriculum materials for a full-day kindergarten program for these students. The project, which was funded for one year, was centrally administered by the Office of Bilingual Education (O.B.E.) of the New York City Board of Education, and is supported by Title VII funds. Project staff members include a full-time project coordinator, resource specialist, and secretary, and part-time hourly consultants and teachers.

II. FINDINGS

The evaluation of this project is based on an examination of program materials and records, on-site visits, and interviews with relevant personnel. The findings are presented under each objective as proposed to and accepted by the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA) for the 1983-84 school year.

OBJECTIVE 1: To complete an in-depth assessment of available materials including researching, identifying, and reviewing existing testing and curriculum materials related to the needs of the target LEP populations.

Beyond the initial needs assessment conducted to prepare the program plan for submission to the funding agency, the project completed a thorough assessment of curricula and testing materials which were available for use with the target populations. This assessment was accomplished by meetings with local school personnel and community agencies; surveys of school districts nationwide serving similar populations; review of materials and tests currently in use by the New York City school system; and assessment of the appropriateness of existing materials and tests for the target population.

Specifically, the project coordinator arranged meetings with local bilingual project personnel (school administrators, project directors, teachers, and support staff), parents, and community representatives in order to determine the extent of the need for the proposed materials. One such meeting was held at the O.B.E. on November 3, 1983 (see Appendix A) and another at the City University of New York.

The coordinator, together with the resource specialist, and working closely with O.B.E. staff, also surveyed personnel from school districts throughout the country (such as Miami, Boston, and Chicago) with similar LEP populations to collect existing curriculum and testing materials used by these districts which would be appropriate for use with the project population and to assess their need and potential for using the proposed materials. The resource specialist also requested copies of assessment instruments from commercial test developers.

The project coordinator, resource specialist, project consultants, O.B.E. personnel, and staff members from the Office of Testing of the Division of Curriculum and Instruction then met to discuss the availability of other testing instruments, review the newly-acquired materials, and evaluate their appropriateness for use with the target students. Subsequent to this meeting, B.M.D.P. staff began to adapt these materials for the target languages and appropriate grade levels, and to develop new materials as needed.

OBJECTIVE 2: To develop, pilot test, and validate a screening instrument to be used for new entrants into the New York City public schools, grades K-2, whose primary language is Chinese.

OBJECTIVE 3: To prepare preliminary screening instruments to be used for new entrants into the New York City public schools, grades K-2, whose primary language is Haitian Creole or Korean.

Screening is defined as a preliminary method of distinguishing from the general population those students who may be gifted or who may have a handicapping condition.* Screening develops a profile of a student's

*New York State officially recognized the importance of effective screening with the passage of Chapter 53 of the Laws of 1980. This law, which was enacted on July 1, 1980 requires local school districts throughout the state to screen all new entrants into public schools.

abilities in the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, receptive language development, expressive language development, articulation skills, and motor development. After screening, a student who is suspected of having a handicapping condition is referred to the district's Committee on the Handicapped for further testing and evaluation. Students who are thought to be gifted are referred to the local school district superintendents for further evaluation and possible placement in special academic programs. It is clear that proper initial screening has a positive impact on a child's future academic success.

The B.M.D.P. coordinator and resource specialist, working with personnel from O.B.E. and the Student Health and Screening Unit of the Division of Pupil Personnel Services, identified and hired consultants to help develop the proposed screening instruments. The coordinator herself headed a committee -- including a Chinese language consultant and two consultants expert in test development -- to develop the screening instrument for the Chinese LEP population. The coordinator also organized a review committee composed of bilingual education and test development specialists and classroom teachers to review the proposed screening instruments.

Four screening instruments were developed: one each for Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Korean-speaking students in grades K-2. Each screening instrument provided:

- instructions on how to conduct the tests generally, set up the room, conduct warm-up activities in order to put the child being tested at ease, and administer each of the screening instruments;

- sixteen activities designed to identify students of limited English proficiency who may be either gifted or handicapped, and covering the areas of gross and fine motor development, cognitive development, receptive and expressive language development, and articulation skills;
- a scoring sheet to be used by the operator.

The table of contents for one of the screening instruments is attached as Appendix B. The screening instruments in all of the languages were developed in the same format.

OBJECTIVE 4: To develop and pilot test new or adapted curriculum materials for use with students at the kindergarten level whose primary language is Chinese, Haitian Creole, or Korean.

The number of Chinese, Haitian, and Korean LEP students entering the New York City public school system at the kindergarten level continues to increase each year. There are only a limited number of appropriate materials for use with these students at the kindergarten level, yet effective curriculum materials in their native/primary language are an important foundation for future learning experiences.

The B.M.D.P., in conjunction with O.B.E.'s Center for Assessment and Evaluation, conducted a survey of materials available for bilingual education programs to assess the curriculum and materials developed by Title VII programs and those available from commercial publishers. This study revealed that materials prepared by individual teachers were limited in scope, format, and content since they were geared to the immediate needs of a school, a class, or a specific group of students; additionally, they had not been properly tested in the field. Much of the previously-developed and commercially-available material was found to be inappropriate for the project's target population in New York City. Most contained stereotyped

language, cultural distortions, or historical omissions. Additionally, many materials were not consistent with the curriculum, were too difficult, or were culturally irrelevant.

B.M.D.P. staff and members of O.B.E. prepared a plan for the development of curriculum materials; the plan identified staff responsibilities and development tasks. The B.M.D.P. coordinator and resource specialist, working with O.B.E., also identified and hired resource personnel to develop the proposed materials for the target populations. The hired consultants were experts in curriculum development and either Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), Haitian Creole, or Korean.

The efforts of these consultants resulted in the preparation of a teacher's handbook designed for the All-Day Bilingual Kindergarten for each of the target languages. Titled Learning in a Multicultural World: Kindergarten, each handbook is composed of three parts:

1. A section called "Getting Started," which discusses the problems faced by teachers in bilingual classrooms, and presents concrete suggestions for planning and scheduling the first several days of the school term, creating a learning environment, involving parents in the educational process, assessment techniques, and developing themes of study around six topics.

2. A section in the native languages presenting objectives, activities, vocabulary, materials, lesson plans and evaluation procedures for the six topics noted above. These themes are:

    I. Myself - My School

    II. My Family

    III. Communities

    IV. Family and Communities Adopt to Seasons

    V. Special Celebrations and Important Dates

    VI. Our Environment

3. A section of guidelines for use of the same techniques in English as a second language (E.S.L.) instruction, and a bibliography of resource materials.

The table of contents for one of the handbooks is attached as Appendix C. The handbooks in all of the languages were developed in the same format.

Project staff are now in the process of identifying sites and classroom teachers to pilot-test the developed materials. The selected sites will have concentrations of LEP populations as identified in the project proposal. Criteria for teacher selection at these sites include: previous training, experience, language dominance, and knowledge of the target languages and cultures. Once selected, formal arrangements, including letters of agreement, will be made between the project and each test site.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Bilingual Materials Development Project was able to:

-- conduct an extensive needs assessment to determine the need for, availability of, and appropriateness of curriculum materials at the kindergarten level, for use with Chinese, Haitian, and Korean LEP students;

-- develop a resource kindergarten curriculum handbook in each of the target languages;

-- develop a screening instrument for new entrants into New York City public schools, grades K-2, whose native language is Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin);

-- begin identifying sites and classroom teachers to pilot-test the developed materials.

In one year, the project has been successful in meeting its objectives even though some objectives, were based on a projected time schedule of three years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are aimed at continuing the overall effectiveness of the program:

1. To continue to develop procedures to pilot-test and validate the assessment instruments.

2. To design training activities, such as in-service workshops, to ensure that teachers serving the target population are trained in the proper use of the assessment instruments.

3. To establish systematic communication and coordination with other units within the Board of Education. This coordination is particularly important with those offices responsible for curriculum and materials development, test development, and teacher training.

4. To disseminate widely the materials developed through agencies such as the New York State Education Department and the Title VII national network of centers. Dissemination should occur after materials have been pilot-tested and their appropriateness established.

IV. APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

BILINGUAL KINDERGARTEN MEETING

Thursday, November 3, 1983
9:00 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. OPENING REMARKS — Nilda Soto-Ruiz

2. DISCUSSION - ORGANIZATION MODELS — Genis Melendez-Delaney
   - 2.1 Use of Native Language
   - 2.2 ESL Instruction
   - 2.3 Scheduling
   - 2.4 Cultural Issues

3. PROPOSED HANDBOOK — Aurea Rodriguez
   - 3.1 Content
   - 3.2 Languages
   - 3.3 Personnel

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT — Angela Bazley
   - 4.1 Areas
   - 4.2 Target Population

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